

## Not all big sisters suck by InkedMind16

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**Summary:** Tessa is Dustin's older sister. She has never been the type to follow the rules or do what her mother says. Since the divorce, she's been having the time of her life. When Steve Harrington starts to develop a friendship with her brother, she starts to think of him as more than the idiot who used to be keg king. And they both know about the monsters...[Starts at the end of Season 2]

## 1. Chapter 1 - Freezing at a party

"Harrington, what are you doing with my brother?" Tessa asked accusingly. She leaned in the passenger window with a smirk.

When she saw Steve Harrington's car pull up in the driveway, she had teased Dustin about it. His big brother had already given Dustin too many hairstyling tips. Tessa could still smell the hairspray from outside.

"Oh, c'mon Tess, I'm just taking him to the dance," Steve smiled mischievously.

"You just dropping him off?" Tessa looked at him from under her lashes.

"Why do you ask?"

"I was hoping to catch a ride to the party at Williams house?" Tessa smiled. "Otherwise I will have to walk... and it's a pretty dark night... and Hawkins isn't as safe as it was...."

"- Fine! I'll give you a ride," Steve relented.

"Yes!" Tessa made a quick success gesture and jumped into the back seat.

Dustin came to the door and sighed. He said goodbye to his mother before coming down the steps to the car.

He huffed in the front seat as Tessa reapplied lipstick in the back.

"Did you have to come with us?" Dustin said with folded arms.

"Like I would embarrass you," Tessa rolled her eyes and started smudging her eye makeup a bit more. "Out of the two of us, I'm the least embarrassing one."

They pulled up to the dance and Dustin had finally stopped huffing. Tessa was surprised he was nervous.

"Here we are," Steve said coming to a stop. "So remember once you get in there –"

Dustin turned to him and nodded: "- Pretend like I don't care."

"You don't care," Steve repeated.

"I don't care," Dustin repeated.

"There you go, you're learning my friend," Steve said. "You're learning."

Dustin moved to turn the rear-view mirror towards him.

"Hey..." Steve started.

"What?" Dustin asked, still fixated on trying to see his hair.

"C'mon you look great, okay? You look great, okay?" Steve said taking back control of the mirror. "Now you're going to go in there and –"

"Yeah?" Dustin said.

"Look like a million bucks," Steve continued.

"Yeah!" Dustin agreed.

"And you're gonna slay 'em dead!" Steve said.

"Like a lion!" Dustin agreed then made what Tessa could only believe was the worst lion noise she had ever heard. She looked out the window to try and avoid the embarrassment.

"Don't do that, okay?" Steve said.

"Okay," Dustin replied softly.

"Good luck," Steve said as he offered Dustin his hand which Dustin took eagerly. They both nodded to each other in some sort of bro code before Dustin got out of the car.

Steve and Tessa sat in silence as they watched Dustin walk into the dance. He stood chatting to one of the teachers when Tessa noticed

that something else had taken Steve's attention. Tessa sighed when she realised it was Nancy.

"C'mon Harrington, let's get to this party," Tessa ordered, and she crawled into the passenger seat haphazardly.

"Could you not walk around? What are you? 12?" Steve chided and batted at her while she fell into the front seat.

"Let's get going Steve!" Tessa commanded with an exaggerated finger pointing ahead.

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The party was boring. Tessa had expected as much, but she had hoped for something a bit more exciting. She downed what was left in her red cup.

Steve had drifted off to find his friends and left her alone. Some of the girls she knew, Alex and Katie, had decided to skip this event - something they had neglected to mention at school the previous day.

While Williams was not known for throwing the best parties, Tessa was not sitting at home while her brother was out embarrassing himself for some girl. Her mother wasn't exactly great company either. She would rather be anywhere but in the house.

She went back into the kitchen to find some very drunken boys arm wrestling each other. Some stragglers were watching on with a cool nonchalance.

She was not drunk enough for this. She quickly downed another drink before leaning down on the table between. The boys both looked up at her but didn't stop the battle.

"How's it going boys?" Tessa shouted over the loud music. "Who's winning?"

They were both struggling. Tessa knew them both from Math. Dick and ... Jake? The drunken idiots turned to her with giddy smiles.

"Jake is most certainly losing!" Dick chuckled. His brown floppy hair

was sticking to his forehead from the heat of the place.

"No! Dick is losing!" Jake retorted with a slight slowness.

"I think I can beat one of you," Tessa made the statement and both guys raised their eyebrows.

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The games had escalated to such a point that Tessa had forgotten how much she had been drinking.

She had foolishly suggested that they should see who could jump into the pool in the back yard with the most finesse.

Tessa had competed in acrobatics at state-level which the boys at school usually loved to make inappropriate jokes about. She loved to show them up at every opportunity. It wasn't her best quality but nonetheless, it was fun. All those years of training had to get her something so why not drunken bets? She had made enough money over the last year to buy a levi jacket.

As she stood on the diving board above the freezing water, she could feel some disapproving stares. Her jeans were folded neatly on one of the icy deck chairs. There she was standing on a frosty diving board at the start of winter, wearing only a boxy over-sized shirt, her boxer briefs and her drunken smile. Her feet were turning red but she couldn't feel them so she didn't mind.

Jake had gone first and stood at the side of the pool shivering in the cold. His white t-shirt clung to scrawny chest while Dick stood beside him fully clothed.

"Tessa! What are you doing?!" Steve burst through the small crowd with a look of worry on his face. Tessa made a mental note that non-drunk Steve was a bit of a buzzkill. "It's freezing out here!"

"Shut up Harrington!" Billy Hargrove appeared next to him wearing an unbuttoned shirt and dishevelled hair. Tessa was sure he would smell great if she didn't despise him for nearly running over her brother.

Tessa felt a hand at her back trying to pull her back from the board. She pulled away and nearly slipped.

"Right everyone shut up!" Tessa shouted over the crowd. There was hush but there was still drunken cheers in the background. She turned to Dick. He stood to attention like a war-shy young soldier.

"20 Bucks if I can do a front flip into the pool, right?" Tessa asked. Dick nodded sheepishly as if suddenly sober.

"Right let's get a countdown going!" Tessa shouted. "Five!" She started them off. The countdown continued, and she pushed the cautious person behind her away. She started to focus and position herself. She looked up to see Billy Hargrove licking his lips in the sleaziest way possible. She groaned inwardly and steeled herself for the jump.

"Two!" The crowd cheered. She grinned widely and moved slightly, trying to find her correct footing. Suddenly it was like her old gymnastics coach was standing next to her, screaming in her ear about her footwork.

"One!" The crowd screamed.

Tessa lunged forward and bounced on the diving board, propelling herself into the air. She managed to flip herself round. She hit the water arms first with a smooth dive. The water pushed her down. For a moment she had to remind herself not to breathe in. She let herself sink and could hear the cheers at a distance.

After a moment she broke the surface with a gasp. The water was freezing.

The drunken crowd was cheering – well some were falling over. Dick rushed forward to offer his hand but was pushed out of the way by Billy.

Tessa sighed but took it, eager to get out of the freezing cold water.

"Hi," Billy gave her his signature smile. "That was quite a jump you did there." He smiled.

He managed to snake his hands around Tessa as he pulled her from

the water. She was suddenly conscious that she wasn't wearing a bra with her shirt. His eyes flicked down as he noticed the same thing. He licked his lips again. If she was dumber than she looked, Tessa would have found that gesture somewhat attractive but unfortunately for Billy, Tessa had seen these sleazy tricks before.

Once she was standing, Tessa pushed away from him and caught Steve's eye over Billy's shoulder. He noticed her predicament immediately and gestured for them to leave.

"Thanks Billy," Tessa grimaced and pushed past him. "I can look after myself from here." Billy went to say something but Tessa had already walked by.

Dick scurried behind her and offered her the twenty bucks. She nodded with a smile and snatched it from his fingers.

"I don't have to do the jump, Tess," Dick pleaded from behind her. "R-Right?"

"Do what you want Dick," Tessa glanced back at him as she strode with purpose. Billy was still watching her with interest. "I don't care."

Tessa met Steve and he escorted her to his car.

## 2. Chapter 2 - Let's ride Harrington!

Tessa had grabbed her jeans and trainers before getting into the passenger seat. The items of clothing sat awkwardly in her lap while Steve pulled away from the house. Tessa bit her lip but couldn't help smiling at her actions. She glanced at Steve expecting to find him staring at her with a scowl. He wasn't. He was looking dead-ahead at the road like a good driver.

Yet Steve looked his usual grumpy self.

Tessa shivered as the cold finally hit her fully. She was, after all, sitting in Steve's passenger seat in next to nothing.

"Do you have a –" She had barely gotten the question out before Steve leaned over into the back seat and produced a slightly disgusting hoodie. He held it without looking at her straight in the eye.

Tessa tried to crush the tipsy part of her which wanted to do a weird striptease in the front of Steve's car. She managed to stifle it. She smiled and took the hoodie quickly.

"Thanks," She whispered. Steve just kept looking straight ahead.

"No problem," He mumbled in return.

Forcing it over her wet tightly curled hair, she pulled it all the way down. She didn't put her arms through the sleeves and set about unbuttoning the shirt. Steve just sighed as she twisted awkwardly and with a look of triumph, discarded her wet shirt onto the floor of the passenger seat.

"Do you always like making a scene?" Steve asked as his shoulders became noticeably tense.

"Making a scene? Who? Me?" Tessa grinned as her sarcastic tone clearly annoyed Steve. She looked down and realised she really needed to discard her soaking boxer briefs. She smirked. "No peeking now Harrington! We all know how much of a ladie's man you used to be. Can't have you trying to seduce after you see how good my goods



are..." Tessa was aware she suddenly seemed incredibly drunk. She shook her head as she struggled to change. The fog lifted slightly.

"What are you doing?" Steve asked. He made sure to keep his eyes dead ahead.

"Well I'm not walking about with soaking wet boxers, am I?" Tessa huffed as she pulled off her boxers with little discomfort then started to pull on her nice dry jeans. She wriggled slightly and when Steve drove over a slight bump, her head hit the roof of the car.

"Ouch," Tessa said as she crumpled back down into the seat. She was starting to sober up quickly.

"Serves you right," Steve mumbled. "If you hadn't challenged Jake and Dick to a 'who can do the stupidest jump into the pool' bet, you wouldn't need to change out of your wet clothes! You would be perfectly dry."

His face had been tripping him all night. Tessa snuggled into his stained hoodie, which was bringing heat back to her body, and considered him for a moment.

"You know you'll have to get over it at some point," Tessa said blankly as she looked out of the window.

Hawkins was so dark at this time of year. The street lights barely cut through the blanket of black that had taken over the town.

"What are you talking about?" Steve asked but his face showed that he already knew.

"Miss Nancy Wheeler is taking up all your headspace," Tessa sighed. "Don't get me wrong, I'm happy you're taking an interest in looking after my brother because god knows, I can't handle that idiot alone. But you need to let Nancy go. Yeah you were a shitty boyfriend to start off with, but you didn't break up because of that. You broke up because you both changed."

Steve drove in silence. His face was crinkled in annoyance mixed with frustration.

Tessa glanced at him and groaned. "You know maybe you need to let loose once in a while. You're becoming an old grouchy man!" She poked him in the ribcage and he jolted.

"Hey!" Steve swerved slightly on the road.

"C'mon have a little fun," Tessa teased. She jabbed him again and they suddenly came to a rough stop in the middle of the road. It was lucky it was an empty street.

Steve turned to her. "Tessa, I know how to have fun!"

"Oh really?" Tessa raised an eyebrow and folded her arms.

"Yeah!" Steve said it with exaggeration. He was trying too hard to convince her, and not himself.

"Then show me!" Tessa goaded. Her smile was manic. The thought of inciting something wild out of mothering Steve was too juicy not to take a bite into.

Steve was caught off guard. He retreated into his seat slightly.

"What?... Now?" Steve asked hesitantly.

"Yeah why not?" Tessa leaned forward and entered his personal space. "Or do I need to show you how to have fun, Harrington?" She bit her lip.

"What?" Steve looked scared.

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Tessa sat behind the wheel of the car. She was driving as wildly as she knew how to. Having a driver's license was no fun if you didn't learn quickly how to abuse it.

"Woah! Slow down!" Steve shouted. His hands gripped the dashboard and hair swirled around crazily in the swerving motions.

"C'mon relax! I'm not even going over 50," Tessa hummed. She leaned over and turned the radio up full. Steve covered his ears, groaned,

and reached forward to turn it down slightly before his hand was swatted away.

"I love this song!" Tessa shouted over the music.

Steve laughed as Tessa started to tap a drumbeat onto the steering wheel. She started singing hilariously out of tune.

"How can you just leave me standing?" Tessa screeched. "Alone in a world that's so cold!" She turned to Steve to see if he would sing the backing vocals. He shook his head as he laughed.

A cat was sitting in the middle of the road which Steve barely noticed in time. He grabbed the steering wheel and swerved them out of the way just in time.

"Focus on the road!" Steve cautioned.

"Let's pull over!" Tessa shouted over the music. Prince was still blaring loudly. Steve grabbed for the wheel as Tessa slammed the brake.

"Shit!" Steve hissed when they came to shaking stop.

"You, Henderson, will kill me one day if your little brother doesn't do it first," Steve laughed, falling back in his seat.

"C'mon for five minutes there you weren't such a downer," Tessa insisted. "Really I'm doing a public service by making you less grouchy!"

"A public service? You really are full of shit," Steve laughed as he took the keys out of the ignition. His arm grazed her chest as he leaned around.

"Sorry," Steve mumbled.

A piece of his hair flopped forward. Tessa reached up, without thinking, and pushed it gently back into place. Her eyes flicked to his lips and he was focused on hers. Their breathing slowed. The air suddenly felt colder.

Steve looked back to her eyes and coughed as he retreated.

"Right, I think we need to go get your brother," Steve sat rigidly next to her. "He'll be wondering where I am, and I need to get you home. You stink of beer."

Tessa just nodded with wide-eyes still frozen in shock.

"Yep, uh-huh, let's... let's do that," Tessa nodded.

She opened the car door and mouthed the words, 'what the fuck' to herself before walking around to slide into the passenger seat.

Steve said nothing as he started the car and took off back towards the school.

### 3. Chapter 3 - Hangover time!

*"Steve! Steve what are you doing?!" Dustin asked. Steve had picked up his baseball bat and turned to face them both.*

*"Just get ready," Steve offered the lighter to Tessa. He tossed it to her and Dustin sneaked in to grab it.*

*"Wait!" Tessa shouted but Steve had already hit the ground. Tessa watched from the roof as Steve whistled and encouraged the monster to try something better. Max scooted past Tessa to talk to Dustin. They were whispering to each other, but it was Steve, Tessa was concerned about.*

*The mutant dog surged at him as the guys shouted in panic. Steve raced towards the bus and fell inside. They closed the door. All Tessa could hear was shouts and cries.*

....

Tessa burst up from her bed. She was drenched in sweat. Those stupid demon dogs were still giving her nightmares. Peeling off the covers, Tessa decided to try and get dressed for school. She stood then swayed. The sick was traveling up her throat. She scrambled through the house to the bathroom to vomit. Her hangover hit her like a freight train. She clung to the toilet and let out a cowardly whimper.

She got dressed in a fog.

When she finally got to school, she padded lazily through the parking lot.

She spotted a blue camaro, then struggled not to heave.

Billy swung the car into a space directly in front of her and she quickly kept walking.

"Henderson," Billy called. Tessa didn't turn and hugged her books closer to her chest. "That was quite a stunt you did last night. A girl like you is hard to find." Billy didn't have to sprint to catch up with her.

With her hangover, she was probably walking the speed of a zombie with one leg.

"Oh, piss off, dickhead," Tessa mumbled and tried not to look at him. Her sunglasses were hiding her darkened eyes which felt like they had a bucket of sand in them.

"Oooh, so touchy this morning," Billy smirked. "I'm only trying to pay a pretty girl like you a compliment."

Tessa stopped in her tracks to give him her full attention. The waft of his cigarette hit her nose and suddenly she was craving one.

"Will you give this pretty girl a smoke? Maybe then I'll entertain you," Tessa gave him a lopsided smile then bit her lip. Billy's eyes glinted at the sight, he bit his lip then rummaged through his denim jacket pockets. He produced a cigarette which he then kindly lit for her.

She inhaled deeply, looked at him then continued walking.

"C'mon," Billy whined. "Give me a chance, Henderson."

"Don't you have some bimbo you can fixate on?" Tessa quipped.

"Why would I go after some bimbo when I would rather get to spend time with a gal like you?" Billy had to jog slightly to catch up with her.

"Fuck off Hargrove," Tessa smirked as she flicked away the cigarette butt.

Billy stopped, and sighed in frustration. Tessa kept walking.

"Henderson, you'll go out with me eventually!" Billy called as Tommy joined him.

"Keep dreaming, dickhead," Tessa shouted back.

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Tessa realised that she would be having a difficult relationship with her food at lunch. She pushed some of the items of stale food around

the plate while Alex and Katie yapped on about the rumours about last night.

"Did you really jump into William's pool? Naked?" Alex spluttered excitedly. Tessa looked up and was suddenly struck by the volume of Alex's black hair which had been backcombed to an inch of its life and bathed in hairspray.

Tessa snorted, "No." She paused as the two girls waited eagerly for further detail. "Okay, I was in my briefs and shirt. No big deal!" The girls started giggling as Tessa rolled her eyes.

"It was so cold last night!" Katie scolded. "I can't believe you challenging those two idiots."

Alex nudged Katie: "At least she had Steve to give her a ride home." Katie's mouth dropped open.

"Are you sleeping with Steve?" Katie stuttered. "I bet on Billy."

Tessa tried not to heave again. "My god. That asshole."

"Yeah well... that *ass though*..." Alex played with the food on her and tried to hide a smile.

"And just to clear things up, I'm not sleeping with Steve," Tessa clarified. "He's been looking out for my brother... We're just friends. He gave me a lift home after picking up my brother from the Snowball Dance."

"We're just friends," Katie giggled. "Yeah I'll buy that when you stop staring at him like a hero."

"Shut up!" Tessa flicked some food at Katie with her fork.

"Hey!" Katie squealed and quickly dodged the flying mashed potato.

"Well I think Steve is quite the catch," Alex stated. "Nancy is missing out. Jonathan is a bit creepy. What with all that photography stuff..."

"I forgot Alex," Tessa chuckled. "You're marrying Kevin Bacon!" She made a shocked face and watched Alex's eyebrow curl in annoyance.

"I'm just saying my opinion Tess," Alex protested.

"I'm just teasing Al," Tessa smiled. She took a bite of her food and heaved. She spat it back into the plate like a toddler.

"Jeez! Tess do you have any manners?" Katie mumbled.

Tessa shrugged and looked around the room. Steve was chatting to some of the boys at the other end of the cafeteria. He turned and caught Tessa watching him. He smiled but then turned to leave.

"I'll see you guys in a bit, okay?" Tessa said.

Despite her friend's protests, Tessa pushed off from the table and walked quickly to follow Steve.

He was walking to his car in the parking lot when Tessa finally caught up with him.

"Hey! Steve!" Tessa called as she ran towards him. "Steve!"

When Steve stopped to look at her, she bent over and gasped for breath. Dizziness ran straight to her head. She breathed out loudly.

"What you doing in school? You need to start handling your alcohol better," Steve chuckled. He ran a hand through his hair.

"Shut it Harrington," Tessa heaved. "I just wanted to say thanks for last night."

"Don't mention it," Steve smiled.

"No, I should thank you properly sometime," Tessa smiled. "If you hadn't saved me, I'm sure Billy would have tried to take me away in that camaro of his."

Steve shrugged and looked up from under his lashes, "I'm sure you could have handled him, Henderson, I've seen you beat monsters, so that douchebag would be no bother." He smirked.

"Yeah... unless I had another three beers which is usually when I make bad decisions," Tessa shoved her hands into her levi pockets.



"Anyways, I just wanted to say thanks Harrington." Tessa smiled weakly before she stepped forward to place a soft kiss on Steve's cheek.

"Thanks," She smiled as she backed up and turned back to the school.

Steve just stood there next to his beat up ride with a smile on his face.

## 4. Chapter 4 - New Year's Eve

The next time Tessa spent any one-on-one time with Steve was New Year's Eve at Tina's house party.

Tessa had been wrapped in all the seasonal holiday events and studying that she had barely any time to herself. She was trying desperately to get through the holiday without Dustin driving her nuts.

When Tina's party rolled around, she breathed a sigh of relief.

"**TESSA!**" Dustin shouted through Tessa's bedroom door. "Tess! Tess!"

"Ugh! Alright!" Tessa wrenched open the door and found Dustin practically falling into the room. "**What?!**" Tessa sneered at her little brother.

"Steve is on the phone," Dustin wiggled his eyebrows suggestively. "What's he calling for?"

"He's calling about the party, dumbass," Tessa muttered.

"Hey Tessa Henderson LANGUAGE!" Her mom shouted from the other room. Tessa sighed.

"Sorry Mom!" Tessa called back as she went to pick up the phone.

"Hey Steve," Tessa twisted the cord of the phone around her fingers.

"Hey, do you want me to walk over with you to Tina's?"

"You not driving tonight?"

"It's New Years Eve, Henderson," Steve said it as if it was a rite of passage, or a yearly ritual.

"That's cool," Tessa replied. "See you in 20 minutes?"

"Yeah sure," Steve agreed. "See you then."

"See ya," Tessa hung up the phone and turned to find Dustin staring at her expectantly.

"Spill," Dustin demanded.

Tessa just laughed and gave him a pat on the head.

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Tessa skipped down the driveway towards him.

"Looking sharp, Harrington," Tessa nodded to Steve's signature jeans, white socks and white sneakers combination. The only change was his jumper which was black teamed with his new grey jacket.

"Not doing too bad yourself, Henderson," Steve gave her a genuine smile. It was so unusual that Tessa had to look away and she knew she was blushing. She was wearing a blue dress which came up to her collar bone with slightly puffed sleeves. It was tied around the waist with a white belt. She still had on her totalled white converse. Over the top, she had put on her large levi jacket.

"Thanks," Tessa smiled.

They walked side by side to Tina's and could hear the party before they saw it.

"I'm surprised Tina's parents still let her throw parties," Tessa stated.

"Yeah especially after the keg competitions at the last one," Steve walked along beside her with his hands in his pockets. "I hope that douchebag skips this party."

"I know," Tessa mumbled. "I would like one party where I'm not harassed by Hargrove."

Steve glanced at her and flicked his eyes ahead.

"Ugh," Steve stopped.

"What?" Tessa asked but then noticed the camaro.

"Ugh," She stopped next to him. "Want to go somewhere else?"

"What?" Steve faced her. "Where do you want to go?"

"How about we grab as much as we can get from the party and bail?" Tessa offered. Steve gave her a look that signalled she was crazy. "What?" Tessa demanded. "That's a great idea!"

"Henderson, sometimes I wonder why you're not more popular then you remind me," Steve folded his arms. "You don't turn up to someone else's party then steal their booze, that's a total dickhead move."

"Okay let's just go in," Tessa pushed him along the road as he resisted. "You never know Harrington you might score tonight." Steve laughed at that.

....

Tessa had resorted to her normal tactics of challenging the nearest drunk bro to some sort of challenge. This time it was shots.

Tommy sat opposite at a small table that had been covered with shots. Tessa steeled herself.

"Ready Tommy?" Tessa asked with her hands ready at the plastic shot glasses.

"Tommy," Billy slapped a hand on his back. "Why don't you let me take it from here?"

"Hargrove, Tommy bet me 30 bucks," Tessa leaned back to regard him coolly. "You going to raise his bet? Otherwise, it's me and Tommy here."

Billy licked his lips and signalled for Tommy to move. Tommy quickly stepped aside, and Billy lumbered into his chair. He peeled off his leather jacket to reveal loose blue shirt which revealed the top of his pecks. Tessa mentally chastised herself for finding him attractive after 2 beers.

"If I win, I get to take you out," Billy offered.

"I'm not interested," Tessa rolled her eyes.

"You didn't let me finish Henderson," Billy leaned forward and rubbed his bottom lip with his thumb. "You win, I owe you 50."

The idea of 50 dollars swayed Tessa more than it should. Billy held out his hand for them to shake. Tessa considered it for a moment then relented. She caught Steve leaning on the counter being chatted up by some blonde. She decided quickly.

"You're on, dickhead," Tessa smirked. Billy grinned and they both readied themselves. Fingers itching to grab a shot, Tessa looked to Tommy who had decided to take over the role of referee.

"Ready?" Tommy asked and both contestants nodded. "Go!" He yelled loudly. It was loud enough to grab Steve's attention and Tessa could see him over the shot glass turning to face the commotion.

They pounded the shots like crazy people. Tessa was starting to wane around the 8th shot of tequila. Billy threw back his 10th and drew a breath in through his teeth.

"You alright there, Henderson?" Billy goaded her, and she pulled together whatever energy she had left. She kept downing them until she could hear the room like she was underwater. She tried to focus on Billy's jeering face. Billy was winning and she knew it.

"Fuck," She hissed as she picked up another shot. She felt okay one minute then it hit her. Tessa downed the next shot (her 14th). It crawled up her throat and she heaved. She pushed away from the table to the kitchen sink. She upchucked absolutely everything and gasped her air.

"Yes!" Billy roared. "I win! you're going to have to get yourself done up doll. Next year, we're going out!"

"Cut it out idiot," Steve's voice cut through the noise behind her.

"Fuck off Harrington, a bet is a bet," Billy fired back. "I'll swing by your house to get the details, alright Henderson?" Tessa didn't turn around to tell him it was fine, she just nodded and vomited again.

Someone's hands went into her hair. Her first thought it was Billy so Tessa pushed the hand away.

"Hey!" Steve chided her. "It's me." She relaxed and let him pull back her hair. Steve swept all of it out of her face.

"Jeez... you Hendersons just love trouble," Steve muttered. Tessa finally spat the rest of it and stood up straight.

"I would say it was for the fifty bucks but I don't even know," Tessa whined like a child. She must look pitiful. She wiped her mouth with the back of her hand. "Sorry Steve. You always have a habit of saving me when I do stupid shit."

"Want to get out of here?" Steve smiled softly.

"Yes," was all Tessa could say. She swayed. Steve wrapped his arm around her to support her.

If someone hadn't just witness her throwing up into the kitchen sink, they would think they were a couple.

....

She stumbled as they reached her driveway.

"You alright?" Steve asked. He reached his other hand around to steady her.

"I'm fine, Steve," Tessa smiled giddily.

"You are so drunk," Steve stated factually.

"I'm not drunk," Tessa giggled, and Steve just nodded.

"RRRright..." Steve grumbled. "Where's your keys Tess?" Steve shook her slightly. Her eyes rolled in her skull then refocused on him.

"Steve you are the best... you're so handsome... and you got a cute ass... and that hair," Tessa mumbled. He snorted and began digging through her jacket to find her house keys. "I like you a lot..." She whispered. Steve froze mid-rummage. "Like a lot..." Tessa whispered.

Steve straightened and stared at her.

"You are so drunk," Steve chuckled.

"NO! I really like you Steve Harrington!" Tessa almost huffed like a baby. Steve's smile faltered.

"Alright, let's get you to bed," Steve commanded. He dug through her pockets and finally found her keys. He opened the door for her and as he turned away, he heard her vomit. "I hope that was at least in the bushes," Steve muttered as the door swung open and grasped Tessa. Closing the door behind them, he guided her gently into the house.

"Where's your room?" He whispered.

"This way!" Tessa nearly shouted.

"Tessa, shush!" He hissed and covered her mouth then pulled it away to give it a quick check for vomit.

It was only a short distance then Tessa stumbled through her bedroom door. Steve sighed, watching her fall on her face.

"Let's get you into bed," He mumbled softly and lifted her into her bed. She was stockier than Nancy. He grunted slightly as he pushed her full frame onto the bed. He took his time taking off her shoes, and earrings. He covered her with the blanket and just as he was about to leave, her hand grasped his.

"Stay, please," Tessa whispered. "I keep having nightmares." Her eyes were closed but Steve could hear the worry in her voice.

"Sure, but I'm sleeping on the floor," Steve whispered. "Don't say I'm not good to you."

## 5. Chapter 5 - Morning After

Tessa gasped dramatically as she shot up in bed. She rubbed her head and groaned loudly. She looked over the side of the bed, expecting to find Steve and instead found empty covers next to a rumpled pillow. She groaned again and was surprised to hear a replying moan next to her.

"Tess?" Steve groaned next to her. "What time is it?"

Tessa's mouth fell open. She turned slowly to see a dishevelled Steve Harrington curled up on her bed next to her. His hair was a mess and his eyes cracked open to peek at her.

"Steve?" Tessa nearly stuttered. "Why are you in my bed?" Tessa started to panic. "Does my mom know you're here? You need to leave!" Tessa scrambled up and began pulling her clothes off to change.

Steve propped himself and rubbed at his eyes with one hand. His brown eyes fogged with sleep. He blushed when he looked at Tessa who was frozen mid-change. Tessa mumbled under her breath as she grabbed a t-shirt and jeans to change into. She pulled them on hastily, nearly falling a bunch of times.

He raised his eyebrow when she pulled her jeans over her hips. Tessa rolled her eyes and continued to rush around the room.

Steve sighed and lay back down.

"What are you talking about?" Steve grumbled. "I took you home. My car is outside. I had to deal with you yelling during the night. Of course, your mom knows I'm here. She's not stupid." He put his arm over his eyes and sighed again.

Tessa stopped. She hissed as she pinched the bridge of her nose. She heaved briefly then continued on her quest.

"Why are you in my bed, Harrington?" Tessa asked as she spun around to face him. She immediately regretted it and covered her eye



with her hand.

Steve looked at her from under his arm: "You don't remember?"

"Remember what?" Tessa said, frustrated.

"Well what's the last thing you remember?" Steve sat up and rested his arms on his bent knees.

Tessa sighed and covered her eyes.

"I remember getting to Tina's house," Tessa mumbled.

"Shit Henderson," Steve chuckled. "You got real drunk, but before that I left you for 5 seconds and I come back to Billy Hargrove having drunk you under the table. You were kind of wasted. I gave you a ride home and then you wouldn't let me leave. I tried to sleep on the floor and you kept pestering me. I got into the bed because you wouldn't leave me alone..."

Tessa groaned and rubbed her hands down her face in embarrassment. She stopped.

"Shit," Tessa hissed.

"What?" Steve laughed. "It wasn't that bad."

"No... Steve... It is," Tessa sighed. "I need to go on a date with that douchebag."

Steve laughed and kneeled at the end of the bed. "You're joking."

Tessa shook her head and squealed slightly at the idea. Steve chuckled and ran a hand through his hair.

"Henderson, you also told me you liked me..." He smirked and used air quotations for the next bit. "Like 'a lot', like 'a lot'." Steve smirked so heavily that Tessa nearly heaved again. She tried to look more shocked.

"I was clearly way too drunk!" Tessa laughed with a forcedness. Steve smirked and edged off the bed to invade her personal space. Tessa

was trapped against her drawers as Steve placed a hand at either side of her on the beech wood.

"So drunk that you thought you should tell me I'm the best," Steve grinned. "Ever!"

Tessa playfully smacked his shoulder which made him go 'ouch' and back away slightly but she was still trapped.

"I was clearly, clearly, very drunk," Tessa grimaced but met his eyes and shrunk. He watched her thoughtfully. In an instant, he had taken her chin with one of his hands and slowly placed his lips on hers. Tessa didn't fight it but instead relaxed.

Her hands went to his shirt and pulled him closer.

Steve fumbled slightly as he tried to get close. Too close. They knocked against the dresser and there was a clatter as several hair products fell around on the surface.

They broke apart as a knock hammered against the door. Steve chuckled silently and ran a hand through his hair again.

"What?" Tessa shouted at the door.

"TESSA! MOM WANTS TO SEE YOU!" Dustin shouted back. "AND SHE WANTS TO KNOW WHAT STEVE WANTS FOR BREAKFAST!"

Tessa groaned loudly.

"Alright give me two fucking minutes!" Tessa shot back.

...

Steve sat beside Tessa who looked like a bag of shit. He stuffed pancakes into his mouth and grinned as he glanced at her.

"These are really great, Mrs Henderson," Steve said after he swallowed.

"Thank you, Steve," Tessa's Mom smiled sweetly. "It was so nice of you to give Tessa a lift home last night."

"It's no problem Mrs Henderson," Steve replied before taking another massive bite.

Dustin kept staring at Tessa who had put on a pair of sunglasses and hadn't touched her food.

"Tessa? Are you alright?" Her mom asked.

"I'm fine Mom," Tessa mumbled. She leaned back in her chair and folded her arms. She finally met Dustin's eyes and he smirked.

She grimaced and gave him the finger.

"Tessa!" Her mom scolded.

Tessa just grimaced and looked at Steve who was stuffing the pancakes into his mouth.

"I hope the floor was comfortable for you," Tessa's mom said.

"Y-yes very comfortable," Steve coughed on his food. Her mom raised an eyebrow.

"Yeah, I gave him a blanket and a pillow Mom," Tessa interrupted.

The breakfast passed without so much as a joke from Dustin. She walked with Steve out to his car.

"So..." Steve smirked. "I'll see you tomorrow?"

Tessa tilted her head. "Tomorrow?"

"Well I was hoping to take you to the cinema..." Steve leaned against his car and played with his keys. "On a date?"

Tessa coughed and folded her arms, "Yeah that sounds..." She tried to look less uncomfortable. "Yeah that would be good."

Steve laughed at her attempt at nonchalance.

He reached out and caught her belt loops of her jeans and pulled her to him for another kiss. This one was quick and sweet. When they pulled apart, Steve grinned and got into the car.

As the car pulled away, Tessa waved.

"Oh my god!" Dustin exclaimed from behind her. "You kissed Steve... wow... that's super weird."

"Shut it," Tessa sneered before she stormed back into the house.

## 6. Chapter 6 - Idiots and Getting Some

The music pounded out from her cassette player. Tessa shimmered into a tight denim skirt and adjusted her red vest top. Tessa was getting ready for her date with Steve which she couldn't decide how excited she should be about that.

She froze as she backcombed some of her hair. Her name was being called. She noted it was extremely polite in comparison to her mother's normal tone.

"What?" She shouted back as she tried to pin down a pesky bit of curly hair.

The door to her room opened to reveal her concerned mom. "There's a boy here to see you. He's quite a looker."

It wasn't Steve and the only other person it could be was an insufferable idiot. She shrugged on her jacket and grabbed her purse. Steve would be here soon to pick her up.

Tessa groaned before she quickly topped her hair off with some hairspray. "I'll be out in two seconds." She sighed. She steeled herself in the mirror.

She walked out to see Billy leaning on her kitchen counter as he chatted playfully with her mom. Tessa caught Dustin's angry gaze and mouthed that she would talk about it later.

"Tessa," Billy smiled sweetly as her mom turned to her. "You never told me you had such a lovely boyfriend."

"Mom, he's not my boyfriend," Tessa corrected angrily.

"Yes Mrs Henderson, we're just good friends," Billy's smile was starting to unsettle Tessa.

"Billy? Let's go chat outside okay?" Tessa returned his smile with equal amounts of fakery.

"Yeah sure," Billy pushed himself off the counter. He held out a hand

to shake her Mom's hand. "It was a pleasure to meet you Mrs Henderson. You are a remarkable woman." Tessa's Mom blushed and blurted out some thanks and compliments.

The front door slammed after them. Tessa huffed as she looked at Billy with a look of disdain.

"Right, douchebag," Tessa sneered. "What do you want?"

Billy tutted then licked his lips as he leaned in closer, "C'mon Henderson don't be so touchy. I just want to take a pretty girl on a date." He winked, and Tessa could only shrug.

"Okay," Tessa sighed. She looked out at the surrounding houses and squinted to watch some birds fly over her neighbour's roof.

Billy chuckled, "Wow, I didn't expect you to be so eager." He lit a cigarette, but Tessa swatted it out of his hands and indicated to the window. Her mother was watching them from behind the blinds.

"Don't cream your pants yet," Tessa smirked. "A bet's a bet Hargrove. So when and where, idiot."

Billy smiled and put his hands into his tight jean pockets. "How about next Friday... I'll pick you up at 7." He stated the last part and Tessa suddenly felt it wasn't a question or an offer but a command.

Tessa sighed and shrugged. "Fine." She tried to look more pissed, but her face just wouldn't let her.

Billy smiled and licked his lips in his usual fashion. He opened his mouth to say something smart but stopped when he saw Steve's car struggle into the driveway.

"Harrington! I didn't realise you were friends with Henderson," Billy smirked. "Hope you don't mind me taking her for a ride on Friday." The sleaziness just dripped off of him.

Steve just grimaced and got out of the car.

"Just leave Billy," Tessa sighed as she pushed him down the driveway to his car.

Billy grinned as Steve glared at him.

He opened the car door and caught Tessa's hand. He was trying to be smooth, but Tessa knew he was just trying to wind up Steve. "Well I'll see you on Friday doll," Billy smirked before he checked the window to see if Tessa's mom was still there. Luckily, she had finally stopped watching them. Billy winked at Tessa before moving in closer and placing a soft kiss on her cheek. Tessa pushed him away with a sneer.

"See ya around Harrington," Billy smirked before he got into his car.

Steve shoved his hands into his jacket pockets while they watched Billy tear out of the driveway and down the street.

"What a dick," Tessa sighed.

"I can't believe you would even agree to a bet like that," Steve said and kicked at some dust on the driveway.

"What can I say? I make bad choices at least 70% of the time," Tessa chuckled and walked towards him slowly. She stuffed her hands into her denim jacket pockets and tried to lighten the mood. "I agreed to go on a date with you Harrington, didn't I?"

Steve chuckled and shrugged, "I know. I guess you just have bad standards." He was teasing her, but he wasn't committing to it. Tessa was unfazed and smirked.

"Are you going to get the door for me or not? Or should I give up on dating a guy who is chivalrous?" She quipped but Steve sighed and opened the door for anyway.

"After you," He gestured comically.

...

The film had been incredibly cheesy. Steve had shifted uncomfortably throughout the whole thing and Tessa had struggled to sit like a normal person in the seats that were low to the ground. If she had kissed him last time, she would have tried to make a move again, but it felt strange all of a sudden to try to make a move on someone she had been friends with for a while now. At one point, he attempted to

wrap an arm around her shoulders but fumbled and dropped the popcorn.

The walk back to his car seemed too quick in comparison to how slow the film had gone. Tessa scuffed her converse on the pavement. Steve walked besides her wordlessly. He started to hum, and Tessa sighed.

She fell into her seat and Steve turned on the engine.

The drive was awkward. They were down a quiet road back to her house. Tessa suddenly had a thought that this would be over too soon, and they had barely spoken to one another.

"STEVE!" She shouted. "Stop the car!"

"What?!" Steve shouted back. The car shuddered to a stop. He peered over the wheel and looked around the whole car before finally meeting her gaze.

Tessa started laughing.

"Are you kidding me, Henderson?" Steve started to chide her, but she had clicked off her seat belt and taken his face between her two hands.

"Chill out Steve," Tessa smirked before she pressed her lips against his. The kiss was sweet and chaste. She fell back into her seat while Steve was frozen.

"What was that about?" Steve asked once he had started driving again.

Tessa just smiled and looked out the window.

"Got tired of you failing to make a move," Tessa chuckled and flicked him a look.

He coughed and tried to look cool, "I was just trying to pick a good moment."

"Yeah?" Tessa turned towards him and rested a hand on his thigh.



"When would that be? Next year?"

"I was getting to it," Steve said defensively. "Jeez, you need to be a bit more patient."

Tessa chuckled and ran her hand up his thigh. She bit her lip as he tensed.

"You trying to get me to crash?" Steve tried to smirk but was too tense. His voice came out concerned.

"Or you could pull over somewhere?" Tessa leaned in closer. "Unless the famous Steve Harrington doesn't actually know how to seduce a girl."

"Or I could take you to my house?" Steve countered and squirmed when he felt Tessa's lips graze his neck.

"Hmmm yeah?" Tessa's tongue flicked out and Steve squirmed.

"C'mon, Tess, Tess!" He protested and tried to move away. "I will definitely crash if you keep distracting me."

Tessa sighed and fell back into her seat. She pouted.

Steve glanced from the road to her, and tried to find the words. "But if you want, we can still go to my house. Unless you want to go to bed early... like a square."

"A square...? Is this the 60s?" Tessa teased but suddenly got serious as she continued. "Yeah I think you should take me home... your house I mean." Steve looked at her, and she was biting her lip. He gripped the wheel harder and focused on the road ahead.

"Oh... okay, okay," He swallowed. "Sure. Let's go." He nodded.

The car turned wildly as Steve readjusted his route.

## 7. Chapter 7 - Sweet kisses and Arguments

Steve's house was empty which is exactly the way Tessa wanted it. She stood awkwardly in the Harrington's living room and wrapped her arms around herself. Suddenly she felt incredibly nervous. Steve reappeared from the kitchen with two beers in hand. He looked just as nervous as Tessa now felt.

He handed her a can and ran a nervous hand through his hair again. Exchanging a look of fear, both downed their drinks. Steve finished his and crumpled it in his hand theatrically. Tessa snorted and mimicked him.

"Are we going to make out or what, Harrington?" As soon as it left Tessa's mouth, she grimaced in embarrassment.

Steve sighed and inched forward to grab the edges of her Levi jacket to pull her closer slowly. He looked down at his hands on her jacket. "Are we doing this...?"

Tessa inhaled shakily. Steve finally looked up and noticed that Tessa was still looking down at his hands. "Have you done, this stuff kind of... Have you been with a guy b-

Tessa's head shot up and she nearly stepped back out of his reach but found herself stuck in his grasp. "No, it is not my first time, Harrington. It might not be our first time if you keep thinking shit like that. Is it your first time? Don't be such a dumbass."

"Cool I was just, y'know, checking, I heard you'd-" Steve started to say but this time he backed away as Tessa glared at him.

"You heard what? Harrington?" Tessa folded her arms.

"Nothing," Steve ran his hands over his face then let out a long exhale. "Can we start over? This," He gestured between them. "Is weird. I'm friends with your brother and we've known each other for ages and it just feels like I'm trying to sleep with a family friend."

They stood in silence. Tessa rubbed her chin in thought before

looking down at the beer cans they had placed on the coffee table.

"You're right," Tessa nodded. "I think we need to get slightly drunk to deal with this level of awkwardness."

Steve nodded and jumped over the couch back towards the kitchen. He ran back with 4 more cans. Nearly dropping two of them, he offered one to Tessa and finally set the leftover two cans on the couch. They both stood and downed the two cans again.

"This is stupid," Tessa said frustrated and threw her empty can on the floor.

"Yeah so stupid!" Steve replied animatedly. In sync they both took a step forward and were a breath away from each other.

"So stupid," Tessa breathed, too aware of the proximity to focus properly. Did her breath smell? More importantly, did she smell? Her brain was panicking but her eyes just kept staring at Steve's lips. They were a soft pink. He must have shaved before the date because his chin and jaw were smooth.

Tessa thought she would be the first to cave but Steve surged towards her with two hands grasping the sides of her face. His lips were urgent, and his hands slipped down to push her jacket from her shoulders. His fingers ran down to loop in her belt loops on her denim skirt. The kiss was passionate and forceful. What Steve was giving, Tessa was taking it happily. Her own hands found their way to his neck and slid up into that mess of hair. He groaned slightly as her fingertips ran over his scalp.

Tessa took a step forward and felt them lose balance. They both cried out as they fell backward painfully onto the couch before slipping off onto the carpet next to it. Tessa started to laugh as she rolled off of him and laid beside him. Steve didn't laugh, his eyes were focused. Tessa had never seen Steve look so determined. He crawled on top of her and with hands that seemed to be everywhere at once, he kissed her again.

His hands pulled her vest top up and they sat up to remove his jumper.

What seemed like forever ended with the two of them falling back onto the carpet with panting breaths.

Steve shot her a glance before relaxing back. He pulled down a blanket from couch to cover them. Tessa tried to focus on the ceiling. She had just slept with the king of Hawkins High. What was her life. She couldn't shake the idea that this was the start of a bad idea. She pushed it to the back of her mind and rolled in to rest her head on Steve's chest. His hand came to her head and squeezed slightly.

"What are you doing?" Tessa nearly laughed.

"I don't know, just like enjoying the moment," Steve mumbled.

They laid there for a couple of minutes entwined. They both got dressed and tidied up.

On the drive back, they didn't speak but Steve's hand reached across to take Tessa's. They held hands all the way back to Tessa's house.

The car pulled into the driveway with a slight creak. Steve didn't let go of Tessa's hand.

"Tessa," Steve's voice was low. Tessa only looked at him because she couldn't remember when he'd said her first name so seriously before. "Tessa, I like- I really like you and I don't want you to think that-

"You goin' soft on me, Harrington?" Tessa teased.

"I'm serious," Steve smiled. "I really like you okay? And I don't want this to be a one-time thing. I wanna see you again, like this I mean..."

Tessa sighed and leaned over to give him a kiss. This time she took her time to enjoy it. She pulled back and used her free hand to fix his hair with a smile. "Steve I like you but let's just stay calm and see what happens."

"Okay," Steve nodded as if agreeing but then his head switched back around. "This date with Billy – You will keep it to the minimum? Just go out and come back."

Tessa's face soured. "Are you serious?"

"Hargrove is a handsome guy, I'm not ashamed to admit it," Steve scrambled to defend his statement, but Tessa had already recoiled and pulled on her jacket.

"Yeah Hargrove is so attractive and I'm just going to roll over for him... did your high school bros tell you that?" Tessa sighed and opened the car door. "That's fine Steve. Start things by not trusting me. Great plan. Really makes a girl feel special." She jumped out of the car as Steve protested behind her.

"Tessa? Tess! I didn't mean it like that, C'mon Henderson!" Steve shouted from the car, but Tessa kept walking and blocked him out. As soon

The tears stung Tessa's eyes as she stormed through the house past a questioning Dustin and Mom. As soon as her bedroom door shut behind her, she felt herself break down.

## 8. Chapter 8 - Billy

Tessa ignored Steve for the next week. He called, she told her mother to say she wasn't home. She couldn't decide if she was doing it for him or herself, but she knew that she needed to get away from him for a bit. She knew what people said about her at school. She knew what he'd been like when Nancy had been seen with Jonathan Byers. She had heard about him wiping the slurs off of the cinema board. She knew all of that crap and had still liked him.

At the same time, the King of Hawkins High was a total dick, but she couldn't stop thinking about his perfect hair and his warm brown eyes. She wanted to pretend everything was fine but Steve had a perfect way to just screw everything up.

When Billy's date rolled around, Tessa was in the mood for getting drunk.

She waited on her front steps for the camaro to pull into her driveway just a bit too fast. Billy slammed his car door with a cheeky grin and a toothpick effortlessly held between his teeth.

"Henderson," He winked obnoxiously.

"Hargrove," Tessa grimaced and forced her hands into her denim jacket pockets. She pushed herself off the steps with one of her feet poised on the edge of the middle step. Standing in front of Billy, she suddenly missed the sweet smell of Harrington's hair. Instead all she could smell was cologne and cigarettes.

She bit her lip and he took the toothpick from his mouth and flicked it away into the bushes.

"Wow... smooth Hargrove," Tessa rolled her eyes and walked towards the camaro. Billy grabbed her wrist.

"Hold up Henderson," Billy looked into her eyes. "Don't you want to know where we're going?"

"To be frank, Hargrove," Tessa replied. "As long as it involves beer

and somewhere far away from this house, I'll be happy." She grinned falsely and it dropped from her face quickly. Billy smirked and nodded, releasing her wrist from his grip.

The drive to the overlook was tense. Music with heavy guitars and male vocals screaming pounded from the stereo. Billy tried to smoothly produce a cigarette from a packet whilst driving. He swerved slightly. Tessa sighed and grabbed the packet from his hand before he dropped it onto the floor.

"Where's your lighter?" She asked roughly.

"In my jacket pocket," He was still giving her his signature smirk. She sighed again and reached into the nearest pocket. She found nothing. He chuckled. For that, she made a show of reaching over to his other pocket. Her hand slid down his jacket and into his pocket. She leaned over and let her jacket fall open. At the same time, her mouth drifted a little bit away from his ear. She knew her breath would be soft, and just a bit seductive.

He let out a breathy laugh as she fell back into her seat and put a cigarette between her lips. He watched her light the cigarette after flipping open the lighter and sucking on the cigarette softly.

"Well, well, how would lovely Steve feel about you smoking?" He asked and she passed the cigarette over to him, refusing to put it in his mouth. She released the smoke she had inhaled slowly.

"No one tells me what to do. You must be dumber than I thought because you should have got that by now," She said simply, and she meant it. Even if Steve was her something, it didn't mean she would suddenly be under his control. If she wanted to smoke, she would. If she wanted to drink, she would. If she wanted to see other people, she would.

"Ha, that's the kind of motto I like," Billy laughed and banged the wheel.

"Really?" Tessa couldn't help herself. "I heard you went out with Alecia from Spanish."

"And Henderson? Jealous?" He was too cocky for Tessa to even consider kissing him, let alone make out with him.

"From what I hear and see about the school, Alecia does not like to go against the status quo. She probably made you take her to the diner so everyone could see she was out with you just to impress that guy Harry," Tessa smirked and tried not to laugh.

Billy grimaced for a second before his face hardened. "And I heard that you have a habit of opening your legs for any guy who asks."

It didn't faze Tessa who continued to smirk. "And you're not slut, Hargrove. You've been with more girls than half the football team."

Billy's face cracked and he let out a slow whistle. There was silence but then he finally spoke after exhaling a long plume of smoke. "You got me there, Henderson. We've both been around."

Tessa winced at the comment on the inside and tried to forget about the judgement from the other girls in the locker rooms when they heard about her first time with one of the basketball team. High school was confusing. She was to put out but not be a slut. She had given up a while ago. She knew what she want and she demanded it. Screw the rest.

"Y'know why I wanted to hang out with you Henderson?" Billy asked too seriously.

"I don't know maybe because of my sparkling attitude?" Tessa tried to keep things light. Billy flicked the end off of his cigarette out of the open window. They had reached the overlook which was thankfully empty except for one other car. The other car was a suitable distance away that they couldn't be overheard but close enough to run to if she had to elbow Billy in the balls.

"It's because you're straight-talking Henderson," Billy took a drag from his cigarette. "You don't bullshit or put up a front. You know what you want, and you take it."

Tessa swallowed and focused at a spot on the windscreen.

"You do what you want and I gotta respect that," Billy concluded and



leaned over to her seat. "I also heard that you are amazing in the sack and that you really, *really*, enjoy it." He laughed but stopped when Tessa finally looked at him.

She lunged towards him, and he flinched as if she was going to punch him, but she knew better than to anger the infamous Billy Hargrove. She had been there the night he had nearly beaten Steve to a pulp. She smirked and took the cigarette from his hand and began to smoke it herself without a word or acknowledgement of his clear rudeness.

"I *gotta respect* that you have great taste in cigarettes and cars Hargrove," She said coolly.

Hating herself, she missed Steve. She would rather be inside his rusty car than be anywhere with Hargrove.

"You got any beer?" She finally asked before flicking the butt of the cigarette out of the window and onto the gravel path. It was dark now, the stars shone brightly and she felt herself relax. Billy said he kept a stash in the back and reached over the seats to produce a six-ring of beer cans. Tessa smiled and pulled one off of the ring.

Cracking open a beer, the first thing she noticed was the fizz of the liquid meeting the open air and the snap of the metal breaking smoothly open. She took a generous gulp. As she swallowed, she realised Billy was watching her.

He promptly took a drink of his own can.

"Why did you ask me on this date?" Tessa asked before rubbing her chin and re-approached the situation. "Scratch that why did you force me on this date?"

Billy swallowed his drink then wiped his mouth on his sleeve. "I didn't force you on this date."

"Yeah you did," Tessa nodded before taking another gulp of her beer.

Sighing, Billy rested an arm on the edge of his open window and looked at the sky outside. "I don't know, you reminded me of someone, and you seemed like you would be a good time."

"Did all your friends tell you I put out on the first date?" Tessa asked and watched Billy struggle to answer the question honestly.

"Not exactly," Billy avoided the question entirely.

"Yeah they did," Tessa chugged the last of her beer and offered it back to Billy who threw it out the window. She took another beer and cracked it open, "Men... all of them are stupid assholes. They think they're the only ones getting some." She took another gulp. "You know girls like sex, right?" She jabbed him in the shoulder, and he looked at her with confusion. "Yeah we like sex, we want sex." She pretended to mimic her mind being blown.

"We... know that," Billy tried to defend his entire gender. "We want to make it good for you."

Tessa started to laugh profusely. "You're making me laugh too much."

"We do," Billy protested before he downed his own drinks. Tessa laughed harder.

"Your friend, Jake, do you know how long he lasted?" Tessa could feel the effects of the alcohol taking over a bit too quickly and regretted not eating dinner. "He barely made it past a minute. Then he went and told his little friends about how good a job he did... What an idiot!"

Billy just sat staring at her, clearly confused about the turn in the conversation. Tessa rolled her eyes.

"I know, you wanted me to sit here and listen to your smooth one-liners but Billy, I'm not really interested so we can either have a real conversation or you can take me home and you can phone one of your pretty little pieces of ass to put out," Tessa smirked.

Billy started the car.

The drive was quicker than before. She was so thankful when she stepped out of the car.

"We should do that again sometime Henderson," He smirked and patted the side of his car. Tessa smiled and waved him away with a

chuckle. Her sneakers thumped against the steps and she twisted the handle to find an expectant Dustin standing in the hall with his arms crossed.

"Did you have a nice time?" Dustin wasn't wearing his cap and instead his eyebrows were creased in anger.

"Why do you care?" Tessa asked as she dropped her keys on the counter.

"Steve called again," Dustin stated.

"Really? And what did you say?" Tessa got herself a glass of water and took a sip.

"I told him you were out with Billy," Dustin huffed. "When are you going to talk to him?"

"When he stops being an asshole," Tessa chirped and then felt the smugness drain out of her as Dustin stared at her.

"You can't ignore him forever," Dustin's arms were still crossed. "He is an idiot, but I think he actually likes you which I of course hate. Just talk to him Tess."

"Sure," Tessa shrugged and downed the rest of her water before washing it in the sink.

"Tess," Dustin protested. "Just be nice to him, okay? He's a good guy."

"I said sure! I will talk to him." Tessa held up her arms defensively. Dustin rolled his eyes before walking away. Tessa listened to Dustin's door slam which made their mother shout about slamming doors in the house.

## 9. Chapter 9 - Back at it again

Tessa lied.

She avoided Steve like she had nothing better to do. She guessed she'd overreacted about the comments because to be fair, she was reckless and a bit impulsive – just a bit. Alex and Katie had tried to ask her about her date with Billy Hargrove, but Tessa had decided that it hadn't happened and by the sounds of it, Billy hadn't mentioned it to any of the guys at the school. Tessa would have received at least a few whistles and comments. No one had said anything to her which she was surprised at; Billy had seemed like the type of guy who might pretend he'd scored even though it was the farthest thing from the truth and he had even managed to keep the girl he had seen after her quiet.

Alex and Katie leaned back onto the hood of Katie's car which her dad had bought her for getting her license. Tessa crossed her arms and rolled her eyes as they asked yet again about Hargrove and those tight, *tight*, jeans.

"Guys, nothing happened," Tessa repeated. Alex scoffed.

"What?" Tessa asked, making Alex roll her eyes. "I swear."

"C'mon Tessa, Hargrove is the hottest guy you've ever been on a date with and I'm supposed to believe that nothing happened," Alex raised a dark eyebrow above heavy eyeliner and exchanged a look with Katie.

"Nothing happened guys," Tessa laughed then watched Alex and Katie go rigid. "What? What is it?"

"Tessa can I talk to you a minute?" Steve's voice cut through Tessa and made her inhale deeply before turning to face him. Steve looked like he usually did; voluminous thick brown hair, brown eyes, and soft lips. A part of her wanted another kiss and the other part reminded her they were fighting and that would not help her position.

Alex and Katie both excused themselves because they supposedly had to catch up with Tyler the student newspaper editor about something. Tessa knew it was an excuse. She stepped back and leaned against the hood of the car with crossed arms and a look that read: I'm not bothered.

"What is it, Steve?"

He didn't step closer and she wished he would.

"How was your date with Hargrove?" He kicked at the dust on the concrete carpark and feigned being calm.

Tessa sucked in a breath between her teeth. "Do you really want to ask me that?"

Steve sighed and his shoulders drooped with it. Shoving his hands into his bomber's pockets, he took a step closer. "No, I just want to talk to you, but you've been ignoring my calls."

The carpark wasn't empty and some of Steve's former best friends lounged nearby. They were watching the exchange with interest. "I did." Tessa nodded and squinted at Steve in the bright sunlight.

"Tess," Steve almost pleaded. "I just want to- I don't know I just want to talk to you like normal... I'm sorry."

"Okay," Tessa relented. She was tired of not speaking to him and tired of Dustin's judgemental round face trying to tell her what to do.

Steve blinked. "What? For real?"

Tessa shrugged. "Sure, I think we both acted a bit quickly. I know my reputation and I forget you're the former king of this school." Tessa winced and realised the last comment could come across like a dig. Steve's face crinkled in confusion.

"Are you serious, Henderson? You think I said those things because I want to keep my street cred," Steve threw out a hand. "Are you serious?"

"No – I –" Tessa pushed off the car and tried to reach for him. Steve

stepped away.

"Maybe we should just stay friends Henderson because if you think I give a shit about my reputation or yours, you clearly don't know me," Steve sneered.

"Steve!" Tessa grabbed hold of his arms. It forced him to give her his full attention. "I didn't mean it like that." She was trying to be honest. She didn't want him to think she was concerned about his former reputation.

"What **did** you mean?" Steve calmed slightly but still looked like he would flee if it wasn't for Tessa's hands holding him in place.

"I mean, I know how difficult I am sometimes, and I know how difficult you are," Tessa smiled softly as she tried to break through Steve's defensive exterior.

"I'm difficult?" Steve laughed in disbelief. "Yeah you're difficult." He accepted that bit of information without hesitation.

"I mean we both have issues," Tessa grabbed hold of his jacket lapels and pulled at it lightly. "We're just a bit weird and that's okay. I am sorry and I know you're sorry so let's just get past it. If we don't, I think my brother will disown me."

He finally looked at her with a smirk.

"You're an idiot," He smiled.

"Don't push it Harrington," Tessa smiled before moving closer.

She went to kiss him then stopped. She looked around her to see Steve's former friends pointing at them then watching them intently. She went to drop her hands, but Steve caught them. His own hands went to her chin and drew her closer. It was quick peck and just enough to convince Tessa that he really didn't care. When he drew back, he smiled then followed her quick glance to the team of dickheads across the carpark. He didn't say anything but then he kissed her again.

They pulled back at the sound of whistling and jeering shouts. Steve

laughed but Tessa looked over his shoulder to see the faces of their classmates. She could see the calculating expression of Tommy and his girlfriend. She didn't know what they were thinking but it wasn't something good. Tessa let Steve wrap his arm around her shoulder and lead her back to the school building just as the bell rang.

Tessa's mother had gone out for the evening, no doubt for a blind date, and she found herself in the unfortunate position of looking after Dustin. Her brother was hiding in his room away from any insults that Tessa could concoct to tease him with. The doorbell rang.

At the door were Lucas Sinclair and Max Mayfield.

"Dustin! Your dorky friend is here and Max!" Tessa made sure to smile at Max. She knew with a stepbrother like Billy that the girl probably didn't have the best time at home. She also remembered Max helping Steve with the demodogs and preparation at the junkyard so she was clearly a capable young woman which Tessa could respect. Dustin scrambled out of his room and stood next to her.

"Hey guys," Dustin grinned with a toothless smile.

"Hey Dustin, we're going to Mike's house do you want to come with?" Lucas smiled nervously.

"Sure," Dustin replied but Tessa's arm shot out in front of him.

"Hold up," She smirked. "You need to take the walkie talkie with you and expect you back by 9 alright?"

Dustin sighed. "Sure, I was totally going to stay out all night and not come home."

"Just make sure you're back by 9 okay?" Tessa mimicked his dorky facial expression. He scowled before disappearing into his room and running back out with a backpack. He waved the walkie talkie at her and left an identical one on the table next to the door. The door slammed after him and Tessa flopped back onto the couch. She picked up her book which she'd taken out of the local library – Catch 22 by Joseph Heller. It was an interesting book focusing on the

strangeness of being in the second world war as part of the American Air force. She had barely reopened the book when the doorbell rang again.

"What?" Tessa shouted as she opened the door expecting it to be her punk brother. Instead on the doorstep stood Steve. He looked up at her through his hair that had fell into his eyes.

He leaned his arm against the doorway and gave her his best sultry look. Tessa would be lying if she didn't find herself tingling slightly at the sight of him.

"Henderson do you know how to answer the door like a normal person?" Steve leaned forward and Tessa felt her breath get stuck in her throat. She just wanted him to kiss her.

"Shut up – you know I thought you were my brother," Tessa patted him on the shoulder playfully before letting him into the house. The lock turned easily in the door and Tessa moved to get Steve a soda.

"And why have I been graced with your presence tonight?" Tessa jumped up to sit on the counter in the kitchen. Steve placed his soda next to her and slowly positioned himself between her jean-clad legs.

"I don't know," Steve's hands ran up her thighs and back down to her knees. "Maybe I just wanted to see you." His eyes lit up and his hands repeated their journey up her thighs again.

"Oh really?" Tessa smiled.

"Yeah really," Steve's hands slid up and took hold of her thighs. "And you told me your mom was out tonight and I know Dustin is out with his friends." His eyes flicked down and back up.

Ten minutes later they were sitting on the floor watching a scary movie on the television. The faux screams and terrible effects made Tessa flinch and hug into a Steve's chest as he had wrapped his arm around her. He flinched as well and the popcorn in the bowl on his lap jumped but remained safely within the bowl.

"Shit," Steve flinched a particularly bad scare. The popcorn bowl tumbled from their laps onto the carpet. Steve lunged forward and



pulled his arm from behind Tessa. She yelped but moved forward to help him.

"Sorry about that," Steve managed to reach the farthest away pieces of popcorn and placed them back in the bowl. He turned and it was then Tessa felt something give.

She clumsily pushed him onto his back, with a slight protest from him, and climbed on top of him, which killed any protest dead in its tracks. He chuckled but was cut off by Tessa's eager lips. The kiss went on, deepened and Tessa could feel Steve's gifted tongue trace a line along her bottom line causing her to shiver. Steve's hands ran across her thighs, butt and back hurriedly before resting on her butt with a light squeeze. She giggled and let him lead the kiss since he was clearly so good at it. He rolled her over and let his hands roam while Tessa pushed her hands into his hair and pulled slightly earning a soft groan.

The doorbell rang. Tessa and Steve froze.

"Shit," Tessa said quietly this time.

Then there was a polite knock.

"Tessa honey? Are you there? Can you unlock the door?" It was Tessa's mother.

"Just coming!" Tessa shouted.

Tessa pushed Steve off of her and scrambled to her feet. She changed the channel, put the popcorn on the coffee table and threw a cushion at the awkward Steve who was trying to cover his crotch. Steve sat down on the sofa and strategically placed the cushion on his lap. Tessa blew out a breath and fixed her hair before opening the door to greet her mother.

"Hey mom, how was your date?" Tessa smiled and hoped the flush on her face had died down.

"It was good," Her mom took off her coat. She grinned when she saw Steve sat on the sofa. "Aw Steve, it's so nice of you to keep Tessa company." She then gave Tessa a knowing look.

"Hello Mrs Henderson, I hope you don't mind," Steve didn't move from the sofa which made Tessa stifle a laugh.

"Not at all," Tessa's mom grinned then leaned into Tessa to whisper. "He's such a nice boy." She patted her daughter's arm and excused herself to the bathroom.

Tessa met Steve's embarrassed eyes and laughed.